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Housekeepers' Chat

Monday, June 25, '28, or later.

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

Subject: The Story of a 4-H Club Girl, Edith Reneau of Wheeler County, Texas, Program includes questions and answers, menu, and recipes. Approved by Bureau of Home Economics, U. S. D. A.

Bulletins available: "Aunt Sammy's Radio Recipes," "Canning Fruits and Vegetables at Home,"

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Do you have any friends who are pessimists, and proud of it? There's a fellow in my own home town, who goes about with a long face, shaking his head over the general "ornery-ness" of human nature. Old Graybeard is particularly bad on a Monday morning. If it happens to be a rainy Monday morning, I walk two blocks out of my way, so I won't have to listen to his tale of woe. The last time I saw this pessimistic old codger he was berating the younger generation.

"We're going to the dogs," said he. "We'll keep on going to the dogs till the young folks learn to accept responsibility, and settle down to hard work, the way their pas and mas did."

As he shuffled down the street, it seemed to me that the very air above his hoary old head turned a dismal blue.

When I reached home, I found among my letters some stories about the boys and girls who are members of 4-H clubs. After I'd read a few stories about these ambitious youngsters, I wanted to run out and give Old Graybeard some facts about the younger generation.

Take Edith Reneau, for instance. Edith Reneau is a 4-H club girl of Wheeler county, Texas, who is attending the national Club Congress at Washington, D. C., this week.

Talk about achievement! Two years ago, when Edith Reneau was only sixteen, she canned almost 900 quarts of fruit, and dried 65 pounds. Last year she canned more than 700 quarts of meat, fruit, and vegetables. She even canned turkey, and rabbit, and 'possum. She canned a calf, too -- her calf made 50 quarts of meat, soup stock, mincemeat, and chile.

This 4-H club girl knows her vitamins. Besides 16 or 17 other varieties of vegetables, she canned lots of tomatoes -- almost 200 quarts of tomatoes. "I selected these fruits and vegetables," explains Miss Reneau, "because they are the things that will keep my family in good health this winter, when there are no fresh vegetables and fruits."

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Miss Reneau is as skillful with the sewing machine as with the cookstove. Last year she made 157 garments, including 45 dresses. She does all her own sewing, and most of the sewing for the other members of the family.

But the most thrilling part of her story I have not yet told. Let's go back four years, to the time when this successful club girl was a mere youngster of 14 years. The story of her first project is one of the most entertaining I've heard for many a day. Edith chose poultry for her first project. The outstanding feature of her poultry husbandry is the determination with which she met a long series of disasters.

She began her club career by purchasing 45 Barred Rock eggs. When the eggs arrived, four of them were cracked. Edith pasted cloth over the cracks, and set them anyway. Of the 29 chicks that hatched, one came from a cracked egg. Four of the 29 chicks died of white diarrhea. This left 25. One got drowned, leaving 24. One suffered a broken leg, when a plank fell on it. However, this one didn't die. Edith bandaged the leg, with splints, and the chick got well.

Next came the big test of Edith's gameness, which I'll let her tell in her own words:

"One day the mother hen was hunting something for her babies to eat. When she tore open a sack of black-eyed peas, the chicks ate some. In four or five hours, the peas began to swell in their crops. I sterilized my little scissors, cut open their crops, removed the peas, and then sewed the chicks up with white silk thread," explains Edith. Only two of the 24 chicks which had been mended with white silk thread died from the operation. There were left eight pullets and fourteen roosters.

It looks as if Fate might have smiled on Edith Reneau by this time, but she had one more calamity up her sleeve.

"One night," says Edith, "an old hog broke into the chicken house, ate one rooster, and was preparing to eat one of the pullets, when I ran it away. The hog had already torn the skin, from the crop to the wing, and then down to the breast bone of this pullet. I washed the wound, and sewed it up with white silk thread. The pullet lived."

Now don't you agree with me that Edith Reneau was a plucky 14-year old? She didn't make any big sum on her poultry flock this first year, but she demonstrated the perseverance and the ingenuity that have finally placed her in the front rank of the 4-H club members.

The next time I see my pessimistic old friend, I'll tell him the story of Edith Reneau. I wager he'll change his mind about the younger generation. First thing you know he'll throw away his cane, toss his hat into the air, and become a confirmed optimist. Maybe he'll be elected cheer-leader of the local 4-H club.

Now that we've had our story, we must get to work. Questions must be answered, rain or shine.

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First question: "Will you please broadcast directions for canning cherries? And do you have a recipe for Pickled Cherries?"

Answer: Instead of broadcasting directions for canning cherries, I'm sending you the bulletin called "Canning Fruits and Vegetables at Home." It contains directions for canning practically every fruit and vegetable which is used on the American table.

However, I'll broadcast directions for "Pickled Cherries," since this recipe is not in the bulletin. This is a short recipe -- won't take you long to write it. Everybody ready -- directions for Pickled Cherries:

(Read slowly). Wash and pit large, sour cherries. For each quart of pitted cherries add three-fourths of a quart of sugar. Everybody hear that? For each quart of cherries, add three-fourths of a quart of sugar. Sprinkle the sugar over the fruit, in layers, and let stand overnight. In the morning, stir until the sugar is dissolved. Then press the juice well from the cherries. Tie a small quantity of whole spices in a loose cheesecloth bag. Drop this into the juice. Boil down until the juice is three-fourths of the original quantity. While the sirup is hot, pour it over the cherries, which have been drained. Add two table-spoons of well-flavored vinegar to each pint. Seal, and let stand two weeks, to become well blended, before using.

Second question: "Does the Bureau of Home Economics of the U. S. Dept. of Agriculture have any bulletins on interior decorating?"

Answer: The Bureau of Home Economics has an excellent bulletin on "Curtaining the Home," which contains some information about interior decorating. However, this bulletin has been so popular that it is no longer on the free list. You can get it by sending ten cents to the Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C.

Third question: "Can you send me a free bulletin on meal-planning?"

Answer: Indeed, I can. The bulletin has already been sent to you. Anybody else want one? This question reminds me of a letter I received the other day from a listener in the far west. She says that she often wonders, when she listens to the "Housekeepers' Chats," what our grandmothers would have thought, if someone had told them that their granddaughters would prepare meals suggested by radio. Well, I imagine our grandmothers would have smiled tolerantly, and said something like this: "Lawsy me! What impossible ideas some people do have!"

While we're on the subject of meal-planning, we might as well write a recipe or two in our radio notebooks.

Let's see what the Menu Specialist has suggested for supper this evening. A Vegetable Loaf! If there's anything I particularly like, in the summer time, it's a Vegetable Loaf, made with tasty vegetables, and nuts, and served with Tomato Sauce. Good way to use up small quantities of left-over cooked vegetables, too. There are ten ingredients in this Vegetable Loaf. Before I read the recipe,

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I'll tell you that the word cup is used five times, the word tablespoon two times, and the word teaspoon two times. You might save time by writing c for cup, capital T for tablespoon, and small t for teaspoon. Ten ingredients, for Vegetable Loaf:

- 1 cup chopped cooked celery
- 1 cup diced cooked carrots
- 1 cup cooked peas or string beans
- 2 cups soft bread crumbs
- 1/2 cup chopped nuts
- 3 tablespoons butter
- 4 tablespoons liquid from cooked vegetables
- 2 eggs, beaten
- 3/4 teaspoon salt, and
- 1/8 teaspoon pepper

Let's repeat the ingredients: (Repeat)

Melt the butter, and mix it with the bread crumbs. Don't forget to save about one-fourth cup of buttered crumbs for the outside of the loaf. Now mix together all the ingredients, and form into a loaf, in a greased pan. Cover the top with the buttered crumbs you saved for this purpose. Bake in a medium oven, for 20 minutes. The loaf should be hot clear through, and the crumbs on top a golden brown. Serve with Tomato Sauce. There are two recipes for Tomato Sauce in the Radio Cookbook.

Well, look here! I got so interested in the Vegetable Loaf that I forgot to read the entire menu. This is it: Vegetable Loaf with Tomato Sauce; Pop-Overs; Iced Tea with Lemon and Mint; Fruit Salad; and Cheese Straws. Recipes for Pop-Overs and Cheese Straws are in the Radio Cookbook, too, so we won't need to bother with these.

The Fruit Salad might be made of sliced fresh pineapple and sliced oranges, with fresh grated coconut on top, arranged on crisp lettuce.

Once more, let's check the menu, which is just as appropriate for lunch as for supper: Vegetable Loaf with Tomato Sauce; Pop-Overs; Iced Tea with Lemon and Mint; Fruit Salad; and Cheese Straws.

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